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Programme planning

Proposed revisions to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (article VII and annex)

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The Regulations of the United Nations Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation were first adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/234. The corresponding Rules were promulgated and issued as ST/SGB/PPBME/Rules/1 (1987), pursuant to Assembly resolutions 37/234 and 38/227 A. The Regulations and Rules were subsequently amended by the Assembly in its resolutions 42/215, 53/207 and 54/236 and in its decision 54/474.

2. In its resolution 67/236, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to bring to its attention, at its sixty-eighth session, through the Committee for Programme and Coordination, a report proposing revisions to the relevant Regulations and Rules (ST/SGB/2000/8), based on changes approved by the Assembly in its various resolutions on programme planning. The proposed revisions to the Regulations and Rules were submitted by the Secretary-General in his report (A/68/74 and Corr.1). The Assembly, in its resolution 70/8, endorsed the Committee's recommendations as contained in chapter II.A of its report (A/70/16) on the proposed revisions to the Regulations and Rules as submitted by the Secretary-General. The corresponding Regulations and Rules were promulgated and issued as ST/SGB/2016/6, which included the approved revisions to articles I to VI. No revisions were made to article VII, Evaluation, and the annex, in accordance with paragraph 34 of its report, in which the Committee decided to defer consideration of the proposed revisions to article VII, Evaluation, of the Regulations and Rules to its fifty-seventh session and recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to propose further revisions to article VII and the annex to the Regulations and Rules, taking into account relevant resolutions of the Assembly.

3. The proposed revisions to article VII and the annex to the Regulations and Rules are contained in the annexes to the present document and are submitted in

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response to the recommendation of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the subsequent request of the General Assembly in its resolution 70/8. Existing regulations and rules and the proposed revisions are provided for the consideration of the Assembly, together with comments and references to resolutions where relevant. The proposed revisions in the present report supersede the earlier proposals reflected in the previous report of the Secretary-General.

Annex I

Proposed revisions to article VII of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation

Regulation rule	*Comment*	*Updates required*	*Justification for change*
Article VII			
Evaluation			
Regulation 7.1			
The objective of evaluation is:	No change		
(a) To determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Organization's activities in relation to their objectives;	No change		
(b) To enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflection, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives.	No change		
Rule 107.1			
(a) The objectives of a programme or subprogramme shall be the standards against which its relevance, effectiveness and impact will be assessed. As a necessary component of programme evaluation there shall be an assessment of the relevance, quality and usefulness of individual output and the effectiveness of the output in achieving the time-limited subprogramme objectives.	No change		
(b) Baseline data and indicators of achievement shall be utilized in the evaluation process to assess programme impact in terms of the objectives. An attempt shall be made to identify and analyse the factors associated with effectiveness and impact.	No change		

Regulation rule	*Comment*	*Updates required*	*Justification for change*
(c) Evaluation findings shall be communicated to Member States through intergovernmental bodies and to heads of departments and offices in order to facilitate the reconsideration of existing mandates, policies, strategies and objectives, the substantive content of programmes and its utility to the users.	No change		
Regulation 7.2		**Regulation 7.2**	
All activities programmed shall be evaluated over a fixed time period. An evaluation programme as well as a timetable for intergovernmental review of evaluation studies shall be proposed by the Secretary-General and approved by the General Assembly at the same time as the proposed medium-term plan.	Replace the words "medium-term plan" with "strategic framework"	All activities programmed shall be evaluated over a fixed time period. An evaluation programme as well as a timetable for intergovernmental review of evaluation studies shall be proposed by the Secretary-General and approved by the General Assembly at the same time as the proposed **strategic framework**.	Updated in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/269 (para. 5)
Rule 107.2		**Rule 107.2**	
(a) All programmes shall be evaluated on a regular, periodic basis. At the programme or subprogramme level, evaluation plans shall be linked to the medium-term plan, and they shall be integrated with the programme budget cycle.	Replace the words "medium-term plan" with "strategic framework"	(a) All programmes shall be evaluated on a regular, periodic basis. At the programme or subprogramme level, evaluation plans shall be linked to the **strategic framework**, and they shall be integrated with the programme budget cycle.	Updated in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/269 (para. 5)
(b) The evaluation system shall include periodic self-evaluation of activities directed at time-limited objectives and continuing functions. Programme managers shall, in collaboration with their staff, undertake self-evaluation of all subprogrammes under their responsibility. Specifically:	No change		

Regulation rule	*Comment*	*Updates required*	*Justification for change*
(i) The timing, scope and other characteristics of a self-evaluation study shall be determined by the nature and characteristics of the activities programmed and other relevant factors;	No change		
(ii) Methodological support shall be provided by the Central Evaluation Unit in connection with the preparation of self-evaluation reports;	No change		
(iii) Evaluation plans, which are required for each new and ongoing subprogramme, shall be prepared by programme managers and shall contain the following elements: a definition of the purpose of the evaluation and the anticipated application of evaluation findings; the evaluation methodology to be employed; the characteristics of the evaluation (e.g., the scope of coverage and the period covered); the measures of change (e.g., the nature of the progress and the impact indicators to be employed); the means of information collection; the administrative arrangements; and the resource requirements.	No change		
(c) In addition to self-evaluation, the evaluation system shall include the ad hoc in-depth evaluation of selected programme areas or topics conducted internally or externally at the request of intergovernmental bodies or at the initiative of the Secretariat. In determining whether an in-depth evaluation should be carried out, the results of self-evaluation shall be taken into account. Specifically:	No change		
(i) The evaluation proposals submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly for its approval shall include a list of programmes or portions of programmes to be covered on a regular, periodic basis by in-depth evaluations and a timetable indicating the years in which the related reports are due;	No change		

Regulation rule	*Comment*	*Updates required*	*Justification for change*
(ii) In-depth evaluation reports to be submitted for consideration by the Committee for Programme and Coordination or by the intergovernmental or expert organs directly concerned with each programme shall be prepared by the Central Evaluation Unit, in collaboration with the programme managers concerned and, if necessary, competent experts in the fields involved. The Joint Inspection Unit may also assist in the preparation of such reports;	No change		
(iii) At least one in-depth evaluation study shall be undertaken each year. Such a study shall normally be completed within two years.	No change		
Regulation 7.3			
Evaluation may be internal and/or external. The Secretary-General shall develop internal evaluation systems and seek the cooperation of Member States in the evaluation process, as appropriate. Evaluation methods shall be adapted to the nature of the programme being evaluated. The General Assembly shall invite such bodies as it sees fit, including the Joint Inspection Unit, to perform ad hoc external evaluations and to report on them.	No change		
Rule 107.3			
(a) Self-evaluation shall be conducted by programme managers in compliance with guidelines established by the Central Evaluation Unit, which will be responsible for quality standards, methodology, the adaptation and transfer of evaluation information and ad hoc studies.	No change		
(b) The United Nations programme categories shall be used as a reference, but the primary focus of self-evaluation shall be on the subprogramme, outputs and activities.	No change		

Regulation rule	*Comment*	*Updates required*	*Justification for change*
(c) Self-evaluation reports shall be concerned with the effectiveness and impact of subprogrammes. In them, programme managers shall:	No change		
(i) Assess the quality and relevance of the outputs of each subprogramme and their usefulness to the users;	No change		
(ii) Compare the situation existing at the start of the implementation of each subprogramme and what remains to be done in order to ascertain the extent to which a subprogramme has attained its objective;	No change		
(iii) Analyse the extent to which the objectives of the programme have been attained and the impact of the totality of subprogrammes implemented in the context of the programme;	No change		
(iv) Identify, in the light of such findings, other possible designs for the programme; that is, alternative subprogrammes that might be considered in order to improve performance in attaining the programme objectives.	No change		
(d) The programme evaluation system shall utilize all information collected during the programme performance, monitoring and reporting process but shall remain separate and distinct from that process.	No change		
(e) The programme evaluation system is separate and distinct from the personnel performance appraisal system. Since the programme evaluation system is concerned with programme effectiveness and impact rather than the performance of individual staff members, no information shall be transmitted between the two systems.	No change		

Regulation rule	*Comment*	*Updates required*	*Justification for change*
	Insert new regulation 7.4	**Regulation 7.4**	
		The Office of Internal Oversight Services shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the strategic framework of the Organization.	Updated in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B (para. 5 (c) (iii)), and 58/269 (para. 5).

Regulation rule	Comment	Updates required	Justification for change
Regulation 7.4 ***The findings of the intergovernmental review of evaluations shall be reflected in subsequent programme design and delivery and policy directives. To this end, a brief report summarizing the conclusions of the Secretary-General on all evaluation studies conducted in the established evaluation programme shall be submitted to the General Assembly at the same time as the text of the proposed medium-term plan.***	Renumber regulation 7.4 to 7.5 in accordance with the proposed revision above and replace the term "medium-term plan" with "strategic framework"	**Regulation 7.5** The findings of the intergovernmental review of evaluations shall be reflected in subsequent programme design and delivery and policy directives. To this end, a brief report summarizing the conclusions of the Secretary-General on all evaluation studies conducted in the established evaluation programme shall be submitted to the General Assembly at the same time as the text of the proposed **strategic framework**.	Updated in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/269 (para. 5)
Rule 107.4			
(a) Evaluation findings in respect of ongoing or continuing activities shall be directly and immediately communicated to those responsible for programme planning and management to permit mid-course correction if required.	No change		
(b) The evaluation system shall include the monitoring of action taken on the basis of evaluation conclusions and recommendations.	No change		
(c) Evaluation methods shall be made consistent and comparable so as to facilitate the adaptation and transfer of evaluation findings among United Nations programmes.	No change		

Regulation rule	*Comment*	*Updates required*	*Justification for change*
(d) The reporting of evaluation results shall include a statement on the comprehensiveness and rigour of the evaluation process; it shall clearly differentiate between objective evidence, professional technical judgments and political judgments of Member States, and all its conclusions and recommendations shall be supported by such evidence and judgments. The recommendations contained in the report shall be unambiguous and possible to implement.	No change		
(e) Intergovernmental or expert committees directly concerned with each programme shall formulate, in connection with the evaluation reports submitted to them, recommendations concerning methods of implementation and shall suggest, where appropriate, a new design for the programme, resulting in a new set of subprogrammes. Those recommendations shall be transmitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination for consideration and, in the case of programmes concerning servicing activities, to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions as well.	No change		
(f) After considering the recommendations of the competent intergovernmental or expert organs and the recommendations contained in the reports prepared by the Central Evaluation Unit, the Committee for Programme and Coordination shall propose to the Economic and Social Council and to the General Assembly measures that may relate to:	No change		
(i) Changes in procedures used in implementing ongoing programmes;	No change		
(ii) The redefinition of the content of programmes and subprogrammes.	No change		

Regulation rule	*Comment*	*Updates required*	*Justification for change*
(g) Measures thus proposed shall be considered either in connection with the formulation of a new plan after study by the intergovernmental bodies concerned of the report summarizing the conclusions of the Secretary-General on the relevant evaluation studies, as envisaged in regulation 7.4, or in connection with a biennial revision of the plan, as envisaged in regulation 4.13.	No change		
(h) A summary report shall be prepared periodically to include findings of individual reports and general conclusions on the design of the programmes reviewed in order to assist in the preparation of the medium-term plan.	Replace the words "medium-term plan" with "strategic framework"	(h) A summary report shall be prepared periodically to include findings of individual reports and general conclusions on the design of the programmes reviewed in order to assist in the preparation of the **strategic framework**.	Updated in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/269 (para. 5)

Annex II

Proposed revisions to the annex of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation

Existing text	*Proposed change*
Activity. Action taken to transform inputs into outputs.	No change
Budget year. The second year of a biennium, in which the Secretary-General submits the proposed programme budget for the following biennium.	No change
Common services. Common services are either conference services rendered to Member States or administrative services rendered by a single unit to more than one department or office.	No change
Competent intergovernmental organ. An intergovernmental organ is competent to provide legislative mandates to the Secretariat in the areas covered by its terms of reference as set out in intergovernmental resolutions or decisions, normally those establishing its existence. Such competence may be global, regional, sectoral or functional.	No change
Delivery of output. An output is generally considered to have been delivered when the service is completed or when the products resulting from a programme activity are made available to the intended primary users; e.g., in the case of a report or a technical publication, when it has been circulated to Member States, interested Governments or other primary users; in the case of a sales publication, when it is placed on sale.	No change
Effectiveness is the extent to which expected accomplishments are achieved.	*Effectiveness* is the extent to which **objectives and** expected accomplishments are achieved.
Efficiency is measured by how well inputs are converted into outputs.	No change
End user is the recipient or beneficiary of an output or accomplishment.	No change
Evaluation is a process that seeks to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, effectiveness and impact of an activity in the light of its goals, objectives and accomplishments. Specifically:	No change

Existing text	*Proposed change*
• *In-depth evaluation* is undertaken by the Central Evaluation Unit at the request of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, as endorsed by the General Assembly, or at the request of other intergovernmental bodies. It may also be undertaken by evaluation units in regional and sectoral secretariats at the request of their governing bodies. This type of evaluation may also be initiated by the Secretary-General for a particular programme as the need arises. In-depth evaluation focuses on the programme. On the basis of studies conducted by the relevant evaluation unit for their consideration, the Committee for Programme and Coordination, intergovernmental bodies at the regional and sectoral levels, other technical intergovernmental bodies and appropriate expert bodies concerned review entire programmes or the entire work of an entity in depth. The objective is to make recommendations that would help the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to formulate decisions aimed at increasing the overall relevance, effectiveness and impact of the programmes of the United Nations in the context of the intergovernmental goals and policies;	No change
• *Self-evaluation* is undertaken by programme managers primarily for their own use. Self-evaluation focuses on the subprogramme and can be applied to all sectors, including political, legal, humanitarian, economic and social affairs, public information and common services. As an integral part of the management process, the design and conduct of the self-evaluation procedure are specified at the planning and programming stages in conjunction with the design of the relevant subprogramme. Findings are applied by the programme managers to make necessary adjustments in implementation or are fed back into the planning and programming process in the form of proposed changes in the design and/or orientation of the subprogramme or project concerned. While the results of self-evaluation are not normally reported at the intergovernmental level, the conclusions drawn from the analytical information generated for various subprogrammes and projects within a programme can be used as inputs for assessing the programme as a whole;	No change
• *Internal evaluation* covers both self-evaluation and in-depth evaluation (see above);	No change

Existing text	*Proposed change*
• *Ongoing evaluation* is the examination of an activity during its implementation to assess its continued relevance and progress towards the achievement of its objectives;	No change
• *Ex post evaluation* is the assessment of the relevance, effectiveness and impact of an activity carried out some time after its completion.	No change
Expected accomplishment is a desired outcome involving benefits to end-users, expressed as a quantitative or qualitative standard, value or rate. Accomplishments are the direct consequence or effect of the generation of outputs and lead to the fulfilment of a certain objective.	No change
External evaluation is performed by entities outside the United Nations Secretariat. The General Assembly invites such bodies as it sees fit, including the Joint Inspection Unit, to carry out this type of evaluation.	No change
External factors are events and/or conditions that are beyond the control of those responsible for an activity but that have an influence on the success or failure of the activity. They may be anticipated in the form of assumptions or they may be unanticipated.	No change
Impact is an expression of the changes produced in a situation as the result of an activity that has been undertaken.	No change
Indicators of achievement are used to measure whether and/or the extent to which the objectives and/or expected accomplishments have been achieved. Indicators correspond either directly or indirectly to the objective or the expected accomplishment for which they are used to measure performance.	Indicators of achievement are used to measure whether and/or the extent to which the objectives and/or expected accomplishments have been achieved. Indicators correspond either directly or indirectly to the objective or the expected accomplishment for which they are used to measure performance. **Indicators should ideally be strategic, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound.**
Inputs are personnel and other resources necessary for producing outputs and achieving accomplishments.	*Inputs* are personnel and other resources necessary for producing outputs.
Intergovernmental organ. An organ is intergovernmental if its membership consists of Governments. Thus, United Nations bodies consisting of persons serving in their individual capacities are not intergovernmental organs, even if the persons concerned were nominated by Governments or elected by an intergovernmental organ.	No change

Existing text	*Proposed change*
Legislative mandate. A legislative mandate is a request for action addressed to the Secretary-General or an executive head acting on his behalf in a resolution or decision adopted by a competent United Nations intergovernmental organ.	No change
Monitoring. Monitoring is the periodic determination by the head of a department or office, or by the Central Monitoring and Inspection Unit, of the actual delivery of final outputs in comparison with the commitments for the delivery of outputs set out in the programme budget as approved by the General Assembly.	*Monitoring*. Monitoring is the periodic determination by the head of a department or office, or by the **Department of Management**, of the actual delivery of final outputs in comparison with the commitments for the delivery of outputs set out in the programme budget as approved by the General Assembly.
Objective. In programme budgeting, objective refers to an overall desired achievement involving a process of change and aimed at meeting certain needs of identified end-users within a given period of time.	No change
Off-budget year. The first year of a biennium, in which the Secretary-General submits an outline of the proposed programme budget for the following biennium.	No change
Outputs. Outputs are final products or services delivered by a programme or subprogramme to end users, such as reports, publications, training, servicing of meetings, or advisory, editorial, translation or security services, which an activity is expected to produce in order to achieve its objectives.	No change
Priority. A priority is a preferential rating for the allocation of limited resources. Thus, activities with the highest priority are those that would be conducted even if total resources were significantly curtailed; activities with the lowest priority are those that would be curtailed or terminated if all anticipated resources were not available or if activities with a higher priority had to be commenced or expanded.	No change
Programme. A programme consists of the activities undertaken by a department or office.	No change

Existing text	*Proposed change*
Programme manager. A programme manager is the Secretariat official responsible for the formulation and implementation of a programme as defined above, normally the head of an organizational unit. For the purposes of self-evaluation, programme managers also refer to those who are involved in the implementation of subprogrammes, namely, the head of a division, branch or section.	No change
Programme strategy. A programme strategy is a sequence of means of action to be undertaken for the purpose of achieving an objective.	No change
Relevance. Relevance is the extent to which an activity, expected accomplishment or strategy is pertinent or significant for achieving the related objective and the extent to which the objective is significant to the problem addressed. Relevance is viewed in the context of the activity's design as well as in the light of the factual situation at the time of evaluation.	No change
Subprogramme. A subprogramme consists of activities within a *programme* aimed at achieving one or a few closely related objectives as set out in the medium-term plan. The subprogramme structure shall correspond, to the extent possible, to an organizational unit, normally at the division level.	*Subprogramme*. A subprogramme consists of activities within a programme aimed at achieving one or a few closely related objectives as set out in the **strategic framework**. The subprogramme structure shall correspond, to the extent possible, to an organizational unit, normally at the division level.